

Leviticus Chapters 21-24 Torah Reading (Parshat Emor)
English version to be sung to the Torah tropes by Len Fellman
Latest version May 4, 2020

21:1 Then said YHWH to Moses: Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them,
For a dead person none shall defile himself [among his kin],
2 [except for] [his own flesh] that is close to him: for his mother [and for his father], [for his son and for his daughter], [and for his brother],
3 [and for his sister] who is a virgin who is close to him, as she has not become a man's. For her, [he may make himself *tamei* (impure)].
4 He shall not be defiled among his kin, [to profane] himself*. *According to Robert Alter
5 [They must not shave], [to make a bald spot] [on their head]. The edges of their beard (*peah*), [they shall not] shave,
[and surely in their flesh] they shall not cut a gash.
6 Holy they will be to their God. They must not desecrate the name of their God,
[for indeed], the fire offerings of YHWH [and the food offerings] [for their God], they do bring forward: so they must be holy.
7 A woman who is a whore, [and is thus profaned]—[they shall not] [take to wife],
[and a woman] divorced from her husband, they may not [take to wife]. He must thus be holy to God.
8 [Him you must treat as holy], [because of the fact] that the food offering to God he brings forward.
Holy [he will be for you], since [holy indeed] am I—YHWH, [who hallows you].
9 The daughter of a man who is a priest who profanes herself by whoring: [it is her father] that she profanes. In fire, [she must be burned].
10 [Now as for the *cohen*] who is exalted over his brothers, [of whom is poured] [on his head] | the oil of anointing, [and who has filled] his hand
(*i.e.* who was ordained) to wear [the priestly garments], his hair he must not dishvel, and his vestments [he must not tear].
11 [The presence of] any *nefesh* of a dead person, [he must not] enter. Even for his father or for his mother, he shall not make himself *tamei*.
12 [From the sanctuary] he will [not go out]. [He shall not] profane the holy shrine of his God
[because he bears on himself] [the distinguishing mark] of the oil [of anointing] [of his God]. [The sacred oil is upon him]. I am YHWH.
13 [And as for him]: a woman in her virginity, [he must take as a wife].
14 A widow or a divorcee, or one profaned by whoring: these he must not take as a wife.
[Rather, indeed], a virgin from his people he shall take as a wife.

21:15 (Thus he will not profane his seed) [among his kin], [because of the fact] [end aliyah] that I am YHWH, [who hallows him].

16 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, as follows:

17 Speak to Aaron saying: A person [who is from your seed], [throughout your generations], of whom [there is] in him a defect, [shall not] come forward, to bring a food offering to his God.

18 Because [any man] of whom there is in him a defect, may not come forward:

a man who is blind or who is crippled, or is mutilated, or has a misshapen limb,

19 or a man of whom there is in him a broken leg, or indeed, a broken arm,

20 a hunchback or a dwarf, [or one] with a blemish in his eye,

[one who has] severe eczema or one who has ringworm, or who has a swelling of the testicles.

21 [Also any man], [of whom there is in him] a defect, [who is from the seed] of Aaron the priest, [may not] come forward, to bring fire offerings for YHWH. There is a defect in him. Indeed [food offerings] to his God—he may not come forward to offer.

22 [Still, the food offerings] of his God—[both from the holy] of holies [and from the holy]—[these he may eat].

23 However, [to the cloth partition] he [may not come near], [and to the altar], he may not approach, since a defect is in him.

He must not defile [My holy places], [for indeed] I, YHWH, [do make them holy].

24 Thus spoke Moses to Aaron and to his sons, [and to all the children] of Israel.

22:1 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

2 You must speak to Aaron [and to his sons] [to be conscientious] [about the sacred offerings] [of *B'nei Yisrael*],

that they do not profane My name that is holy. Indeed [these are the things] [that they consecrate] to Me. I am YHWH.

3 You must say [this to them]: Throughout your generations, [if there be a man] | [who comes near]—[if he be one of your seed]—[to the sacred offerings] that are consecrated [by *B'nei Yisrael*] to YHWH when his *tum'a* (uncleanness) [is upon him], [then shall be cut off] the *nefesh*—[the soul of that person]—[from before Me]: I am YHWH.

4 And if [there should be a man] from the seed of Aaron, and he [has skin blanch] (*tzaruah* or *tzara'at*) [or a male discharge], [then the sacred offerings] he may not eat until he [becomes clean],

[nor one who touches] [anything *tamei* by a dead person], nor a man of whom goes out from him [an emission of seed],

22:5 [nor a man] who has touched [a swarming creature], [which makes one] *tamei*,
[or who touches] a human, [that makes one] *tamei*, with any *tum'a* (impurity).
6 [A person] [who will have] [touched these things] is *tamei* until evening.
[He may not] eat [any sacred offering] [until such time] as he bathes his body in water.
7 When there comes the sunset, he is clean. [After that] he may eat [the sacred offerings]: his daily bread, [it in fact is].
8 [An animal that has died] [or one torn by beasts] he may not eat, [to become *tamei* thereby]. I am YHWH.
9 They [shall heed what I charge], [so as not to bear] [for it] sin, and die therefrom, when [they profane it]. I am YHWH, [who hallows them].
10 [No stranger] may eat [the sacred offering], [nor may one] [who dwells with a priest], [or a hired hand], eat what is holy.
11 [Now for a *cohen*]: if he buys a person as the purchase of his silver, the latter may eat thereof,
[as for one born] [in his house]—[any of them] may eat his food.
12 [And when the daughter of a priest] belongs to a man [who is a stranger], [she indeed]—the donated holy things may not eat.
13 [And when the daughter of a priest] should become a widow [or a divorcee], [and seed—that is, offspring]—[she has none],
[then if she returns] to the house of her father, [as in her youth], the food of her father, [she may eat]. [But no outsider] may eat of it.
14 [And should a man] eat such a sacred offering inadvertently,
he must add [a fifth of its value] [to it], and give it to the priest: [the sacred donation].
15 [The priests] [shall not profane] [the sacred offering] of *B'nei Yisrael*, that they set aside for YHWH,
16 [thereby laying] on them a sin of trespass, [by their eating] [the sacred offerings], [because indeed] [end aliyah] I am YHWH, who hallows them.
17 Then said YHWH to Moses, saying,
18 You must speak to Aaron [and to his sons], and to [all the children] of Israel, [and say this] to them:
any [person whatever] of the house of Israel [or of the sojourners] [in Israel] who [bring forward] their offering
[for all their vows] [and all their contributions] that they bring forward to YHWH [as a burnt offering],
19 [to be acceptable for you], [it shall be] [an unblemished male] [taken from the herd], from the sheep, [or from the goats].
20 [But any animal] that has in it a defect, [you must not] bring forward, because not acceptable is it for you.

22:21 [And when a man] [brings forward] [a sacrifice of well-being] to YHWH [to express a vow], or as a contribution, from the herd, or [from the flock], [wholly sound] it must be, for acceptance. [No blemish] may be upon it.

22 [An animal that is blind] or one that is injured or maimed [or one that has warts] [or that has] mange or ringworm—you shall not offer these to YHWH. [As a fire offering] [do not put] [any of them] on the altar to YHWH.

23 A bull or a sheep with a stretched [or crimped limb]—as a contribution you may [offer it], [but for a vow], it will not be accepted.

24 [If its testicles are bruised] or are crushed, pulled loose or severed, you may not bring it forward to YHWH. [In your land], you shall not do it.

25 [From the hand] [of a foreigner] [you shall not bring forward] the food of your God, [from any of these], [for their corruption] [is in them]; a defect [is in them]. They are not acceptable for you.

26 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

27 A bull, a sheep, or a goat—when it is born, [it must remain] for seven days under its mother, and from [the eighth day] onwards [it is acceptable] as an offering by fire to YHWH.

28 [As for a bull] or a sheep: [both it] [and its young], you must not slaughter on the same day.

29 When you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to YHWH, [in a manner acceptable for you], [it must be offered].

30 [On that very] day [it must be eaten] with nothing left over until morning. I am YHWH.

31 [You shall observe] my commandments and practice them. I am YHWH.

32 [You must not] profane My name that is holy. [I shall be sanctified] among the children of Israel. I am YHWH, [who hallows you],

33 [who is bringing you] out from the land of Egypt, to be to you a God. [end aliyah] I am YHWH.

23:1 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

2 [You must speak] to the children of Israel, and say to them,

[The appointed times] of YHWH: you must proclaim them—[special times] [that are holy]. [The following] [are My special times]:

3 For [six days] [there may be done] tasks, but on [the seventh day] [there is a sabbath] of sabbaths—[an assembly, a holy time].

[Any tasks], you [may not do]. A sabbath it is to YHWH in all of your settlements.

4 [Now these] are the festivals of YHWH—the convocations that are holy, which you must proclaim, [at their appointed time]:

23:5 [In the month of Nissan]—[which is the first month], [on day] [the four and tenth]—[the fourteenth of the month]
“between [the two evenings]” (*i.e.* at twilight) is the Passover to YHWH.

6 On the five and tenth day—the fifteenth [of this month] is the festival of *matzahs* (unleavened bread) to YHWH.

For seven days, you will eat *matzahs*.

7 [Of these seven days], [on the first one]: [a holy assembly] [there will be] for you.

Any tasks that are laborious (*melekheth avodah*) you may not do.

8 [You shall bring] [an offering by fire] to YHWH for [seven days].

Then day the seventh [is a holy assembly]. All *melekheth avodah* you may not do.

9 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,

10 [You must speak] to the children of Israel, and say to them, [When you come] [into the land]—the land that I am giving you,
and you reap its harvest, [then you must bring] [an *omer*—a sheaf] from your first harvest to the *cohen*.

11 [He shall raise up] [and wave the *omer*] before YHWH [to be acceptable for you].

[From the morrow] [of the festive rest-day], [it shall be elevated] by the *cohen*.

12 [And you shall prepare] on the day that you wave the *omer*: a lamb [that is wholly sound], [of the first year], as a burnt offering to YHWH.

13 [And its meal offering]: two tenths of an ephah [of wheat meal] [that is] [mixed with oil], a fire offering to YHWH, of a soothing fragrance,
with a libation of wine, one-quarter *hin* (close to a quart. Also, two tenths of an ephah is about a gallon).

14 [But as for bread], and roast grain and groats: these [you may not eat] [until this day]—this selfsame day—
until you [will have brought] the offering [to your God]. A statute everlasting for all generations, in all [your dwelling places].

15 [You shall count] for yourselves from the morrow [of the festive rest-day]—from the day that you brought the *omer* [for a wave offering]:
seven weeks—whole weeks, they shall be.

16 Until [the day after] the sabbath—the seventh one: [you shall count] fifty days.

[Then you will bring forth] a *minchah*—a new grain offering to YHWH.

17 Then from your settlements—[from your land, you shall bring] bread [for a wave offering]—

[two loaves]. Made [from two-tenths measure] of flour, [they shall be]. With leaven, [you will bake them]: first fruits to YHWH.

23:18 [Then bring forward] [with the bread] seven lambs, [wholly sound], in [their first year], [and a bull]—[a young one of the herd], just one, and rams—[you'll bring two]. [They shall be] [a burnt offering] to YHWH, [with their meal offering] and their libation, a fire offering of pleasing fragrance to YHWH.

19 [And you shall prepare] a goat—one he-goat, as a *chattat* (sin offering), [together with two] [lambs of the flock] in their first year, as a sacrifice of well-being.

20 [He shall raise them up]—the *cohen* | [the priest will elevate them], [together with] the bread [of first fruits] [as a wave offering] before YHWH together [with the two lambs]. [A holy portion it is] to YHWH, for the priest.

21 [This you shall proclaim] [at that very time] | on [that selfsame day]: [a holy assembly] there [shall be for you].

[All tasks that are laborious], you [may not do]. A statute [for all time], [in all your settlements], [throughout your generations].

22 [And when you reap] the harvest [in your land], [do not completely reap] the corners (*peah*) [of your field] [when you harvest].

[The gleanings of your harvest] [you must not] gather. [For the poor] [and for the stranger] you must [leave them]. [end aliyah] I am YHWH your God.

23 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying

24 [You must speak] to the children of Israel, as follows: [In month number seven], [on the first day] [of the month], [there shall be] for you [a day of rest]. A reminder with horn blasts, [a sacred assembly].

25 All tasks that are laborious to you are forbidden. You must bring an offering by fire to YHWH.

26 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying:

27 [Now, you must note this]—[on the tenth day] [of the month]—this seventh month—a day of atonement [it will be].

[A holy assembly] it will be [for you]. [You must afflict] your souls, and bring an offering by fire to YHWH.

28 [All manner of work] to you is forbidden upon this [same day].

Indeed, day of atonement it is, to atone [for you] in the presence of YHWH your God.

29 In fact, any person who does not fast upon [this very] day [will be cut off] [from his or her people].

30 [Any person] who performs any work on that [same day] [I will cause to perish] the soul of that person, from among his people

23:31 All work to you is forbidden: a statute eternal for your generations in all [the places you live in].
 32 A sabbath of sabbaths it is for you. You must afflict your souls.
 On the ninth of the month in the evening—from evening to evening—[end aliyah] you must cease [on your rest day].
 33 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,
 34 [You must speak] to the children of Israel as follows: On the five-and-tenth—[the fifteenth day] of month number seven—[which is Tishrei]—
 the festival [of the thatched huts], will be held seven days for YHWH.
 35 On day the first [a sacred assembly]. All *melekheth avodah* (laborious tasks) you may not do.
 36 For seven days you must bring a fire offering to YHWH. But then, [on day number eight] [a sacred assembly] there shall be for you:
 you must bring a fire-offering to YHWH. [Day of restraint (*atzereth*)] it is. All *melekheth avodah* is forbidden.
 37 These [are the special times] of YHWH which you must proclaim as sacred occasions,
 to present fire-offerings to YHWH, [a burnt offering], [and also a meal offering], sacrifice and libations, each thing on its own day.
 38 In addition to the sabbaths of YHWH,
 and apart [from your gifts], [and apart from] your vows [and apart from] your free-will offerings that you bring to YHWH.
 39 [Now, you must note this]: on the five and tenth day of [month number seven], [when you have harvested] the produce of the land,
 celebrate the festival to YHWH for seven days. On day the first [a time of rest], and on day the eighth a time of rest.
 40 You will take for yourselves on [day the first] fruit from beautiful trees, branches [of date palms], and boughs of the myrtle,
 [and willows of the brook]. [You will rejoice] [in the presence of] YHWH your God for seven days.
 41 [You will celebrate] it [pilgrim festival] to YHWH, for seven days in the year,
 a statute for the ages, throughout your generations. In the seventh month, you must observe it.
 42 In huts you must dwell for [seven days]. [Every native] in Israel must dwell in *sukkot*.
 43 [In order to make known] to [your generations] that [in *sukkot*] [I made to dwell] the children of Israel,
 when I brought them out [from the land] of Egypt. [For I] am YHWH your God.
 44 Thus declared Moses [the special times] of YHWH [end aliyah] to the children of Israel.

24:1 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,
 2 [You must command] the children of Israel that they take for you [a quantity of oil] of olives [that is clear], and beaten, for the light, to kindle a lamp, perpetually.
 3 [On the outside] of the curtain of the testimony in the Tent of Meeting, [it shall be arranged there]—it will be set out by Aaron [from sunset time] [until the day breaks], before YHWH continually: a statute for the ages, [throughout your generations].
 4 On the lampstand [of pure gold] [he shall set out] the lamps before YHWH continually.
 5 [You will take] [some wheat flour] and bake it into twelve (two and ten) loaves.
 Two-tenths of an ephah (about a gallon) [you will use] for a loaf—for each one.
 6 [And you will] [set them out] in two rows, six to a row, [setting them on] the table of pure gold, before YHWH.
 7 You will place on each row frankincense [that is clear]. [It shall be] for the bread as a reminder-portion—[a fire offering] to YHWH.
 8 On the day of the sabbath—on each [and every sabbath]—[they shall be laid out] before YHWH continually, on behalf of *B'nei Yisrael*, a law for the ages.
 9 [It shall be] for Aaron [and for his sons], [who shall eat it] in a place that is holy, [because of what this place is]: [it surely is holy]. Holy of holies [it is for him], from the fire offerings of YHWH, [a law for the ages].
 10 [There went out] [the son of a woman] of Israel, who was also [the son of a man] from Egypt, among the children of Israel, [and there fought] [in the camp] [the son] [of the Israelite woman], with a man of Israel.
 11 [And the man blasphemed]: the son [of the Israelite woman]—[blasphemed the Name], [and he cursed], and they brought him to Moses. The name [of his mother] was Shelomith daughter of Divri, [of the tribe of Dan].
 12 [They kept him] under custody till it became clear to them the will of YHWH.
 13 Then spoke YHWH to Moses, saying,
 14 [Bring the one] [who uttered the curse] to the outside of the camp.
 [They must lay their hands]—[all those who heard him]—[must lay their hands] on his head. Then stone him—[the entire assembly].
 15 To the children of Israel, [you must speak] as follows: [If there is a person] who vilifies his God, he must bear his offence.

24:16 [Whoever reviles] [the name of YHWH] must be [put to death]. He must be pelted with stones, [by the whole community]:
 [as the sojourner], [so the native]. For his reviling the Name, [he must be put to death].
 17 [Any man] who strikes down the life of a human being, [shall be surely] put to death.
 18 If one strikes down the life of an animal, [he must pay for it]: a life for a life.
 19 [And any man] who causes an injury to his fellow, just as [he has done], so will it be done to him:
 20 [a break] for a break, [an eye] for an eye, a tooth for a tooth: [as he] [has caused] injury to a person, the same will be done to him.
 21 One who strikes down an animal, [shall pay for it], one who strikes down a human, [will be put to death].
 22 One standard of judgment there shall be for you: for the sojourner and for the native, it will be, [because indeed], I am YHWH your God.
 23 When this [was told by Moses] to the children of Israel, they took the blasphemer outside the camp and pelted him with stones.
 [B'nei Yisrael] thus did [just as it was] [end aliyah] [commanded by YHWH] to Moses.

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh or yetiv kadma or pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate the following pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which will have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (or: azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (notably cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a very distinctive melody—for which purpose extra syllables fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “God” or “Adonai”.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
 Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
 Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
 The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
 JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
 Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
 Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
 Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
 The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
 The New King James Bible (1982)